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ABSTRACT

A survey of state commissions concerned with educational excellence showed that the majority of these commissions are not involved with the problems of at-risk youth. The definition of at-risk youth includes the following: (1) young people from poor families of all races, including minorities and immigrants, who face discriminatory policies and practices; (2) girls and young women who miss out on educational opportunities routinely afforded males; and (3) children with special needs who are unserved, underserved, or improperly categorized because of handicap or learning difficulties. Survey questionnaires designed to elicit the main concerns of the commissions were completed by 54 commissions in 32 states. Results indicated that less than one-fourth of those responding have chosen to focus on at-risk youth, or the kinds of programs that could assist such youth. Recommendations are the following: (1) all state educational commissions should consider recommendations targeted at at-risk youth; (2) in states where educational commissions no longer exist, special commissions should be appointed to deal with the educational problems of at-risk youth; (3) governors and state educational officers should take personal responsibility for implementation of recommendations; (4) governors, their State Job Training Coordinating Councils, and the Service Delivery Areas established under the Job Training Partnership Act should help schools and local private industry councils establish programs for at-risk youth. (FMW)

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REPORT

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MDC, Inc., is a private, nonprofit organization concerned with employment policy and programs. Over the past 18 years, MDC has developed experimental programs in its field to be spun off to ongoing operating agencies; developed reports on national employment and training policy, and participated in assessment of national programs. The organization is currently engaged in an independent assessment of the Job Training Partnership Act. In recent years, it has concentrated on the employment problems of poor youth.

Preface

The Mott Foundation's concern for both the nation's educational system and the particular problems of at-risk youth has been long and diverse. Through our programs relating to teenage pregnancy, community education, youth employment and others, we have made strides in both areas — in dealing with the debilitating issues facing our young people, and in making our educational system generally more responsive to social needs.

Notwithstanding the magnitude of these problems and the attention focused on them, too often we have found insufficient information upon which to construct thoughtful courses of action. For this reason, we believe that this report, based on a comprehensive survey of state-level educational commissions, is particularly significant and revealing. Its findings on the relationship — or, more accurately, the lack of relationship — between current excellence-in-education trends and the needs of at-risk youth, add a critical dimension to the national dialogue in both areas.

We join our colleagues in the philanthropic community in urging that more be done to assure equity of opportunity for all youngsters.

William S. White
President
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

This report is a timely reminder that our current crusade for excellence in public education risks neglecting that segment of American youth whose future is most in jeopardy — and whose productive capacity we shall surely need. It would be tragic if in the name of excellence we allowed ourselves to forget those students who will not gain from higher academic standards. Indeed, many of today's youth find current standards very difficult to meet.

Juanita M. Kreps
Honorary Chairman
MDC, Inc.

Executive Summary

At-Risk Youth — "A large proportion of children from poor families of all races. . . minority and immigrant children who face discriminatory policies and practices, large numbers of girls and young women who miss out on education opportunities routinely afforded males, and children with special needs who are unserved, underserved, or improperly categorized because of handicap or learning difficulties. . ."

This survey attempted to answer one central question: Whether, on the whole, the educational excellence commissions established in the states over the last few years have paid attention to the at-risk youth who may make up as much as one-third of all high school students.

The answer is no.

MDC received survey questionnaire returns from 54 state educational commissions in 32 states. While "mainstream" concerns of the commissions are reported upon here (Chapter II, esp. pp. 4-5), we concentrated on questions intended to elicit whether those commissions, first, focused on groups of youth who could be described as at-risk (Chapter III, esp. p. 6); and then whether they had in mind specific services for those youth (Chapter III, esp. pp. 6-7).

Results here indicated that only a minority of the commissions — generally less than one-fourth of all those responding — had chosen to focus on at-risk youth or on the kinds of programs that could assist such youth.

When we asked the commissions whether they had made recommendations targeting at-risk youth, only a tiny minority responded positively:

- Only four commissions (8 percent) targeted economically disadvantaged youth in at least one recommendation;
- Only six commissions (12 percent) targeted underachieving youth in at least one recommendation;
- Only six commissions (12 percent) targeted youth graduating from high school but not planning to go on to further education or training in at least one recommendation.

Put another way (and allowing for overlapping where one commission targeted more than one of the groups above), *only 15 commissions (27 percent of those responding) in 12 states had so much as one recommendation aimed at a group that could be described as at-risk youth. (Chapter III, esp. p. 7.)*

We learned additionally that only a tiny minority of these commissions saw any reason to involve the schools with other public agencies that have programs and expertise designed to deal with the external problems of at-risk youth:

- Only two of the 54 responding commissions saw any role for social services or employment and training linkages;
- Only one checked law enforcement and mental health;
- None saw a role for substance-abuse agencies working with the schools. (Chapter III, esp. p. 8).

From the 15 commissions that had decided to deal with problems of at-risk youth, we learned of ongoing efforts over a wide range of program focus. We found recommendations aimed at early identification and remediation efforts (Chapter IV, esp. pp. 9-10); career exploration and vocational reform (Chapter IV, esp. pp. 10-11); drop-out prevention and reclamation (Chapter IV, esp. pp. 11-12), and transition from school to work, training, or further education (Chapter IV, esp. pp. 12-13). While not all these recommendations had been implemented, efforts were continuing in the states where commissions had spoken out and there was optimism that further progress would result.

We concluded from this survey that, while overall results are distressing, the minority of commissions making recommendations regarding at-risk youth have recognized the problem. They know that the nation is losing 25 percent of all students entering the ninth grade before they graduate. They know that this lost body of students consists of a high percentage of minority students and that minority students are coming to represent an increasingly high proportion of all American youth. They know that it is from these potentially wasted human resources that we can

expect an increase in dependency and a drag on the economy. (Chapter V, esp. p. 15.)

These commissions are saying that excellence requires that standards be higher for all, but that all must be given improved opportunity to achieve. They are saying that the total community needs to become involved in this process and that the employment and training community — especially as established by the Job Training Partnership Act — provides a great opportunity for assisting students in the transition from school to work. (Chapter V, esp. p. 15.)

Our recommendations, accordingly, are:

1. *That all state educational commissions which are still deliberating, or continue in existence for monitoring purposes, consider recommendations targeted to at-risk youth;*
2. *That in states where educational commissions have ceased deliberating, and no longer exist, commissions be appointed specifically to deal with the educational problems of the at-risk youth population;*
3. *That the governors and chief educational officers of the states take personal responsibility for implementation of recommendations assisting at-risk youth made by sitting educational commissions or those subsequently constituted;*
4. *That governors, their State Job Training Coordinating Councils, and the Service Delivery Areas established in each state under the Job Training Partnership Act, use the funds provided for youth to help schools and local private industry councils establish programs which respond effectively to the needs of at-risk youth.*

The purpose of MDC's survey: To determine the extent to which state educational excellence commissions have taken into account the problems of at-risk youth; devising the survey instrument; how we did the work . . .

I. Introduction

In April 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education shocked Americans with a report that gave the nation's public schools failing grades. Pointing to a "rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people," the Commission declared: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we allowed this to happen to ourselves."[1]

In the Commission's view, American education had gone soft. It had lost sight of basics and was unwilling to reach out for academic excellence. The prescription for recovery included increasing academic requirements, imposing achievement or competency tests, lengthening school hours, and providing more training and, subsequently, better pay for teachers. These themes were echoed for the most part in studies done by other groups including the Education Commission of the States' Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, the Twentieth Century Fund, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the National Science Board. The national media picked up the cry and public reaction fed the atmosphere of dismay. Political candidates restated their positions offering unswerving commitment to educational betterment. By October 1983, the Education Commission of the States reported that some 135 state and local education commissions had been appointed and were working toward recommendations for improvements in public education.[2]

At the same time that the efforts of these national commissions were being credited and acted upon at the state level, a different kind of concern was being raised. While those voicing this second concern did not necessarily disagree with the major recommendations of the national commissions — or at least not with all of them — they did call attention to the fact that these recommendations focused little attention on youth who were failing or falling behind — and dropping out of school — even under current educational standards. If the nation were to set out on a crusade for educational excellence, these individuals and organizations wondered, should it not make every effort to see that these at-risk youth could come along? The Children's Defense Fund put it this way: "Competency testing without appropriate remediation for those failing simply stigmatizes and frustrates those students, increasing the likelihood that those students will drop out."[3]

Those raising this cry remembered the nation's reaction to the Soviet launching of Sputnik. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 provided funds for the improvement of science, mathematics, and foreign language teaching. It was subsequently broadened to include support for the humanities and social sciences as well. "Rigor became the catchword of the day," noted Ernest L. Boyer.[4] But with the heightening of expectations for good students, others observed, came nothing helpful to those who were struggling to keep their heads above water academically.

What was happening to those students was already apparent to any who wished to look. "As things stand now," Mortimer J. Adler had reported on behalf of members of the Paideia study group, "that part of the school population that comes from severely disadvantaged minorities can look forward to unemployment after leaving school — thrown on the waste heap of a society that is squandering its human resources."[5]

As an organization working for educational and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth for 18 years, MDC shared the concern that a new educational crusade might leave underachieving students even farther behind. With youth unemployment rising again to well over 20 percent for all youth and to around 40 percent for minority youth, we feared the consequences of policies that might actually impel more unprepared youth to drop out of school.

A key unanswered question centered on the content

of the recommendations that these state commissions would make to their governors and state legislatures. Policy proclamations from national commissions may be influential, but in the final analysis, the fate of public schooling rests primarily at the state and local levels. So, in April 1984, MDC proposed to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation a survey of the commissions and a report which would attempt to answer the question: Have these commissions taken into consideration the plight of at-risk youth in their deliberations and recommendations?

The first job we faced was winnowing down the number of commissions, retaining only those that had assumed a broad educational perspective. Counting local commissions and state commissions with narrow, specialized functions, the total had swelled by early 1984 to approximately 280. The first cut reduced that number to 120. Further investigation showed that only about 75 of those commissions had set for themselves the task of recommending policy applicable to elementary and secondary education.

In the task of selecting the universe for this study, we were assisted by the Education Commission of the States and the National Governors' Association. During the course of our work over the past year, we have been encouraged by the National Commission of Advocates for Students, whose Board of Inquiry, chaired by Harold Howe, II and Marian Edelman, hosted public hearings on children at risk around the country. (MDC attended and testified at the Southern Regional hearing in Atlanta, Georgia, May 17-18, 1984.) We are indebted to all three organizations above, but none of them bears responsibility for our work here or for our conclusions.

We devised a survey instrument and set about telephoning staff of the commissions selected for the study. Most of them agreed to fill out the survey and to answer any questions we might subsequently raise. With persistence, we received responses from 54 commissions in 32 states, and it is those responses, along with telephone follow-up interviews, that provide the substance of this report.

The survey questionnaire is attached in the Appendix. It is necessary to say a word about it. While responses to those parts of the survey dealing with academic enrichment are totaled and commented upon in Chapter II, we made no effort to analyze them or to follow up for further information. Our interest lay with the commissions that actually considered the situation of at-risk youth and had the potential for recommending (or had recommended) improvements aimed at assisting that group. It is with those commissions that we stayed in touch through telephone follow-ups, and it is information from them that makes up the burden of this report.

While the initial survey work was done in the spring and summer of 1984, the study has continued. Many commissions were just beginning their work then, and many of those that had completed their work were anticipating some implementation by their state educational leadership or legislature. Some of the information in Chapter IV was gathered even as this report was being put in final draft form.

One final caution. Nothing in this report is intended to suggest that we have surveyed educational change initiatives in the states. We confined our study to the deliberations and recommendations of the newly formed education commissions as those deliberations and recommendations applied to at-risk youth. Some of the commissions did not respond to our survey, and that group may include a number that did make recommendations within the scope of our inquiry.

That said, we believe we have captured the sense of a broad sampling of the state commissions, and what they said — and did not say — about the at-risk youth in the public schools of the nation today is generally representative.

How the commissions were formed; who served; what the commissions' main concerns were and are . . .

II. The Commissions: Style, Makeup, General Thrust

By February 1984 — 10 months after the National Commission on Excellence in Education's report was issued — 47 of the states had at least one state-wide task force or commission analyzing some aspect of education. Some states had several looking at different issues. The opportunity to take a fresh look at educational goals from the broadest possible perspective clearly was at hand.

Governors were by far the most responsive to the call. Of the MDC sample of councils (54 in 32 states), 36 percent were established by governors, compared to 13 percent by legislatures. Other councils were established by state superintendents and boards of education and by other educational administrators, usually with the blessing of the governor.

These bodies were variously chosen — more often than not by direct appointment — and were composed of a broad spectrum of public officials and private citizens. The average number of members was 23, with the heaviest professional presence from educators (9), private citizens (4), elected officials (3), agency representatives (2), and public representatives (1.5).

Women would appear to have been seriously underrepresented on these groups with an average of only 6.5 members (28 percent) on each commission. Minorities had an average membership of four (17.4 percent). Governors were involved with 41.5 percent of the commissions in one way or another; legislators were involved with 60 percent of the commissions.

The commissions selected a variety of means for gathering information. A typical response to Question 2 under A. *General Information* (p. 18) in our survey ("Please briefly describe the process used by this commission/council to gather information and ideas for its recommendations") was: "Testimony from experts; digests of reports from other bodies; background research conducted by staff; responses from interested organizations; members' knowledge; survey of public attitudes."

Over half of the commissions (54 percent) responding to the survey conducted hearings ranging in number from three to 13 around their states; one-third (31 percent) made site visits to schools.

Methods of operation differed, but most commissions established patterns which involved work by subcommittees. A good example of the structure involved here is that of the Iowa Excellence in Education Task Force, which divided its investigation into six areas, placed one member in charge of each, and then chose memberships for the six subcommittees at large.

The subcommittee headings themselves reveal the Iowa Commission's interests. They were: (1) relationships between the schools and business and industry; (2) relationships between the schools and higher education institutions; (3) school curriculum; (4) teaching quality; (5) student responsibility; and (6) educational framework. The staff later reported on how the commission went about its work:

> "In all, 54 individuals served on the Task Force or on its subcommittees. The subcommittees held 62 days of meetings and heard presentations from 144 persons. Seven surveys were sent to over 12,000 persons and the responses have been tabulated and analyzed, and reports of each have been written. In addition, subcommittee members have solicited opinions from countless other individuals.
>
> "The Task Force itself met 16 times. Each member received minutes of the meetings of all subcommittees, and each meeting began with members providing detailed descriptions of the progress of each subcommittee in developing recommendations.
>
> "As the work of the Task Force neared completion, it became apparent that a number of issues transcended the subject area of a single subcommittee . . .Therefore, in addition to a listing of recommendations from each of the six

subcommittees, the Task Force itself has made five recommendations."

The Iowa Task Force met first in July 1983. Its final report was issued late in 1984 with recommendations prepared for the state's General Assembly to consider in 1985. The various state commissions went separate routes, but the Iowa Commission's time frame for reporting was typical.

* * *

This having been said, what were the major considerations of these commissions and task forces, and what have been their major recommendations? It is worth a few lines to set the stage with an examination of work done by the various states to improve their educational systems before the national commissions' reports.

In 1982 and again in 1983, the Education Commission of the States conducted surveys of school improvement programs to document state efforts to improve the quality of education in the public schools. In 1983, the Commission issued a paper which attempted to provide an overview of findings to that date.[6] Major initiatives developed over the preceding five to six years were summarized:

1. A variety of new state-developed curricula or curriculum guides, often focusing on basic skills, but also covering many other academic areas.
2. A range of new school accreditation standards designed to address quality, requirements for local district and individual school site-planning, and expanded state review of local instructional programs.
3. Numerous broad-based and comprehensive school improvement programs, sometimes specifically including an effective-schools program in which the characteristics of the most effective schools are identified and attempts are made to replicate those characteristics in other school settings.
4. Many state-initiated dissemination and adoption assistance programs, local capacity-building and problem-solving initiatives, and a wide array of new technical assistance services.
5. A variety of strategies related to the testing of students, including state-developed and administered competency tests.
6. An array of activities focused on improving the capabilities of the education work force, including new types of teacher and administrator certification and recertification, teacher proficiency examinations, and teacher and administrator professional development training programs.
7. A host of initiatives aimed specifically at improving mathematics, science, and technology instruction and programs in the schools, including efforts to recruit and retain mathematics and science teachers.

The subject matter covered here is especially interesting in view of the responses of the state commissions and task forces to recommendations on "mainstream issues" on p. 19, under B in the survey form. In that question, the commissions were asked to place a check beside those issues upon which they focused their recommendations. The list included 20 topics and the commissions were instructed to check as many as were appropriate. The issues listed, ranked by frequency, are presented below:

- curricular reform (36)
- professional development of teachers and administrators (34)
- student evaluation/testing (31)
- graduation requirements (30)
- teacher certification/preparation (30)
- salary increases (26)
- instructional time (26)
- effectiveness of vocational education programs in the public schools (22)
- master teachers/career ladders (21)
- college admissions (21)
- academic enrichment programs (20)

- teacher shortages (19)
- longer school days (19)
- school and class size (18)
- textbooks and instructional materials (17)
- academic recognition programs (17)
- specialized schools (17)
- placement/promotional policies (16)
- economic development (13)
- extracurricular/athletic policies (13)

It is intriguing to note how far down in the "pecking order" such items as "longer school days" and "school and class size" fall. But what may be more interesting is the close correlation between the issues most frequently checked in this survey and those raised in the Education Commission of the States' reports from 1982 and 1983. The five issues checked most frequently in the MDC survey — curricular reform; professional development of teachers and administrators; student evaluation/testing; graduation requirements; and teacher certification/preparation — echo in one form or another, one or more of the seven initiatives cited by the Education Commission of the States' studies.

What this suggests may not be surprising. General agreement on major problems in American schools goes back to before the reports of the national educational excellence commissions. Those reports did not so much present new materials as focus public attention dramatically on the existence of problems, and so legitimize a reform movement that had been gathering steam for some years. When the Department of Education published *The Nation Responds* in May 1984, in answer to *A Nation At Risk*, it provided essentially not a catalogue of new initiatives, but an update on a reform movement that had been under way for some time.

The question that interested us in all this was whether anything that had happened in those recent years — rising unemployment rates among the young, increasing discipline problems in schools, the acceleration of an old dropout problem — had focused the attention of educators and education commission members on our neediest young people. The commissions had responded to our nation at risk; now, what about our children at risk?

Who the nation's at-risk youth are; how little attention has been paid to them by the states' excellence in education commissions generally; what few models exist of commissions that have taken these youth into consideration . . .

III. The Commissions and At-Risk Youth

Who are America's children at risk? The National Coalition of Advocates' Board of Inquiry defined them as including: "A large proportion of young people from poor families of all races . . . minority and immigrant children who face discriminatory policies and practices, large numbers of girls and young women who miss out on education opportunities routinely afforded males, and children with special needs who are unserved, underserved, or improperly categorized because of handicap or learning difficulties."[7]

These are the children who are often far behind from the beginning of schooling and at risk of being lost in the academic shuffle in the early grades. More than one of every four students who enroll in the ninth grade (28 percent) drop out before high school graduation. When we consider that many more graduate without motivation to work, or to attend college or go on to further training, it is clear that the at-risk group is a large one — surely more than one-third of all those students who enter the ninth grade each year.

Yet this group is not readily identifiable from school records. When we set out to inquire about them, we found no standard set of figures to identify them on school rolls, and no generally agreed-upon terminology with which to discuss them. Children identified as handicapped under the Education For All Handicapped Children Act are provided special education and are categorized that way. But studies have suggested that many handicapped youth are not identified as such, and many not handicapped are so identified.[8] In any case, the handicapped group is a small part of the overall at-risk group.

So we decided to ask the commissions, first, to indicate whether they had *focused* on the special needs of a broad group of students under several headings (see Targeting Issues, B 26 of the Survey Form).

We are asking here whether the commissions had given consideration to those groups. Responses indicated that only a minority could answer in the affirmative. The highest percentage of positive response in this group was targeted toward the needs of potential dropouts. Here, commissions in 14 states (32.7 percent of the responding commissions) felt that they had focused. The percentage believing that they were considering the needs of these special groups declined from there:

- youth not continuing education after high school — 27 percent
- educationally disadvantaged — 24.5 percent
- handicapped — 20 percent
- underachievers — 18 percent
- economically disadvantaged — 16 percent
- dropouts — 14.3 percent
- minority — 12 percent
- non-English-speaking — 12 percent
- teenage parents — 4 percent
- delinquents — 4 percent
- migrants — 2 percent

It is likely that some commissions did not feel that all of these groupings were legitimate targets in their states (migrants, for instance, in some states). Just as clearly from the responses, however, many commissions felt that focusing on specific target groups of youth was a bad idea. One commission staff member responded by writing on his survey this way: "Wanted across-the-board reforms to benefit all students. Educators don't like to separate out economically disadvantaged students from better-off students. Feel it stigmatizes these youth. Also, these are the kids who present the most difficulty and are the least responsive to teachers."

We then asked the commissions whether they *focused* on a group of special programs and program-related services in their considerations. (See Survey Form.) The questions here were intended to give the commissions an opportunity to describe "how" they had considered serving special groups of youth. Of the 49 commissions responding to these questions, again, a distinct minority showed interest. Ranked highest to lowest, the responses were:

- tighter discipline in classes — 31.4 percent
- skills training — 29.4 percent
- career exploration — 25.5 percent
- remediation measures — 25.3 percent

- tighter attendance policies — 23.5 percent
- school-to-work transition programs — 21.6 percent
- expanded job development and placement services — 21.6 percent
- dropout prevention programs — 17.6 percent

We asked a final group of questions in this general section having to do with possible linkages between schools and various other public agencies and parents. For the first time, the commission responses moved up toward or into the majority sector. Of the commissions responding, 51 percent indicated they would give consideration to broader partnerships between education and the private sector; 41 percent to the role of parents in the schools, and 35 percent to the role of community-based organizations in the schools.

This last group of responses might be considered suspect in view of responses to the next series of questions asked. We had been asking up to now for responses with respect to "focus" or "consideration" in deliberations. We next asked a group of questions dealing with specific *targeting* of recommendations. In other words, we asked whether the commissions specifically recommended any programs from the issues-areas (Survey Form, p. 20) for (1) economically disadvantaged students, (2) underachieving students, or (3) secondary school graduates not planning on further education or training. Where recommendations had been specifically targeted toward any of these three groups, we asked for details and for any news on implementation.

Results here indicated that when it came to making recommendations affecting at-risk youth, only a small number of commissions responded positively:

- Four commissions (8 percent) targeted economically disadvantaged youth in at least one recommendation;
- Six commissions (12 percent) targeted underachieving youth in at least one recommendation;
- Six commissions (12 percent) targeted youth graduating from high school but not planning to go on to further education or training in at least one recommendation.

Adding all this up (and allowing for overlapping where one commission targeted more than one of the groups above), we find that only 15 commissions (27 percent of those responding) in 12 states had even one recommendation aimed at a group that could be described as at-risk youth.

And again, we received comments suggesting that some commissions felt that targeting of any kind was inappropriate. "The commission dealt with the overall program issues but did not narrow down their recommendations to any special population. They preferred to have the recommendations address all students as appropriate," one staff respondent wrote.

Asked about this, a staff member for a commission that did target recommendations to at-risk youth responded this way: "My experience is that where educators talk about serving all students without distinction, what they really mean is business-as-usual, every kid for himself. The strong ones come out OK and the weaker ones don't."

What, then, of recommendations for linkages between the schools and agencies outside the schools that might be of assistance? We noted that the Board of Inquiry for the National Coalition of Advocates for Students had picked up interest in this during the course of its hearings. "To provide greater support for students," the board reported, "some communities are experimenting with school/human service agency linkages which make counseling, health services, and child care available at the school site. This seems to us to be a promising direction. Schools are the social institutions with the greatest potential for identifying student needs and problems before these problems become overwhelming."[9]

We prefaced the questions on this point with a statement (B 4, p. 21): "It has been argued that many of the difficulties of disadvantaged youth in our schools are

caused by problems or circumstances in the community. Such youth therefore may not respond well to attempts to motivate them to academic achievement." The question followed: "Did the commission recommend that other public agencies with programs and expertise designed to deal with such external problems become involved with the schools?"

Agencies listed for checking included law enforcement, mental health, social services, employment and training, substance-abuse, and "other."

- Only two of the 54 responding commissions saw any role for social services or employment and training linkages;
- Only one checked law enforcement and mental health;
- None saw a role for substance-abuse agencies working with the schools.

The failure of the big majority of commissions to see any need for linkages with employment and training agencies — despite considerable past effort to promote such collaboration — supports the view of those who have argued that a wide gulf exists between the two groups of professionals.

One staff member noted that his task force "recognized that services from other agencies and programs are being provided. They (the task force) did recommend recognition be given to those contributing to educational excellence through public service, programs/projects, and professional practice."

But another may have spoken for the majority when he wrote: "Educational commitment of all participants must not be dissipated in meeting other needs which, however worthy, are not educational, and could properly be met by other institutions in cooperation with the schools." For this individual, collaboration would seem to be the business of other agencies operating, presumably, as far from school premises as possible.

Finally, we wanted to see if the commissions had any interest in the issue of equalization of educational opportunity through expenditures per student across school district lines. We asked that question (C 3, p. 21) and learned that only three of the 54 councils had made such recommendations.

* * *

Fifteen commissions, then, of the 54 that responded to the MDC survey clearly identified at-risk youth as in need of special assistance. What made those commissions different, we wondered? We compared this group of 15 with the responding group as a whole.

Differences in membership composition of the 15 commissions were not great, but possibly significant. More private-sector members (4.5 to 3.9) and elected officials (3.2 to 2.9) on the average served on the 15, alongside fewer educators (6.8 to 9). These 15 commissions were not significantly more likely to include representation from minorities or women or State Job Training Coordinating Councils, the state policy-setting body under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), but they were somewhat more likely to include representation from vocational educators — 35.7 percent of these commissions had vocational educators as members as against only 27 percent of the total sample.

These 15 commissions were most likely to call for intervention in the public schools from outside agencies, including law enforcement, social services, employment and training, and mental health. Only three of the full group of 54 commissions made such recommendations, and all three were in the group of 15.

Over half of these commissions attempted to deal with the needs of the educationally disadvantaged. The special needs of potential dropouts were the concern of almost half of these commissions. However, only a few addressed the needs of school dropouts. Asked about the lack of attention to problems of dropouts even on these "exemplary" commissions, one staff member offered an explanation. "We're just not set up to deal with problems of kids after they leave school . . . Of course, I agree that this is where we need to make better connections with employers and the employment and training community."

What has been proposed by the 15 commissions whose recommendations included targeting for at-risk youth; how and to what extent those recommendations have been implemented in those states . . .

IV. The Fifteen Commissions: Toward the Future

The 15 commissions[10] that responded positively to MDC's survey questions about targeting services for at-risk youth were diversely located and organized and did not always share the same purposes and goals. One thing they had in common was the conviction that attention needs to be paid to youth who are likely otherwise to be left behind. "If we're going to enrich things for the brighter kids, we better enrich them for the others, too," one commission member said. "Otherwise, the gap will just widen more."

Their recommendations for assisting at-risk youth were wide-ranging but can be grouped loosely under four headings: (1) early identification and remediation efforts; (2) career exploration and vocational education reform; (3) dropout prevention and reclamation projects; and (4) transitional programs from school to work, further education, or training.

It is clear that it will be difficult to judge overall impact of the commissions' recommendations for some time. Implementation through legislative action is ongoing and is, typically, a slow process. At this writing, while some of the 15 commissions have had successful implementation of their recommendations, with others, questions remain whether substantial change will occur or whether the passage of time will blunt the momentum achieved by the movement for change in the schools. This is especially true of recommendations for at-risk youth, for change as it applies to them was ancillary to the principal thrust of a middle-class movement to make America intellectually and productively competitive.

Early Identification and Remediation Efforts

Delaware's Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth put heavy emphasis on the needs of at-risk youth, especially at the early grade-levels. A key recommendation was mandatory kindergarten. "Well-to-do kids already were going to kindergarten," explained A. Douglas Rothwell, assistant to the governor for policy and administration. "By getting the other kids a year earlier, we felt that we might have time to keep them from being at a double disadvantage."

The Delaware General Assembly put $370,000 into the mandatory kindergarten program and set out to identify youth in need of assistance at the earliest possible age. "Our approach has not been to say that this or that school is bad," Rothwell noted, "but to look at how this classroom is going and how the kids in it are progressing. We think that improving early childhood teaching is key."

Delaware's legislature also put $70,000 into remediation beginning at the seventh grade. Pennsylvania's Task Force on Testing, established to look into competency testing, concluded that the testing approach made sense only if the state made a concentrated effort to improve available remediation. Consequently, the Task Force recommended remediation for all third, fifth, and eighth graders who fell below a designated score on mathematics and reading competency tests. The legislature appropriated $24 million to put this recommendation into effect.

The Georgia Governor's Education Review Commission adopted an approach to early identification and remediation similar to Delaware's. A bill responding to these recommendations was enacted in April 1985, providing special assistance to children in kindergarten through grade five who have been identified as having problems in developing the skills needed to perform up-to-age norms. This approach to testing and remediation is carried out into the upper grades. Special assistance is available to students in grade nine who are one grade-level behind; eligibility in grades ten through twelve is based on scoring below the criterion score on the Basic Skills Test, for which a passing grade is required to graduate.

In Georgia, efforts are being made to predict problems before they become severe. The Department of Education is charged with developing criteria for triggering special instruction programs. "They'll be looking at a variety of factors," says William M. Tomlinson, executive assistant to the governor. "For instance, numbers of children eligible for free lunch or coming from single-parent backgrounds might make a school system eligible to participate." This program is

expected to go into full effect in 1986 at a funding level to be set by the state legislature.

Other commissions came up with remediation packages of one sort or another. In Maine, the Education Reform Act of 1984, for instance, calls for use of alternative curricula to serve students at their level of achievement as tested in the fourth, eighth, and eleventh grades. This was a key recommendation of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Education in Maine.

Career Exploration and Vocational Education Reform

Few aspects of public education have received more criticism in recent years than vocational education. One much-quoted study concluded that job prospects for graduates of vocational programs are not much better, overall, than prospects of students in non-specialized curricula.[11] In *High School*, Ernest L. Boyer noted that vocational education courses were often used as dumping grounds. "During our visits," he wrote, "we heard repeatedly that 'voc ed' is the place to send less gifted students who are 'able to work with their hands rather than their heads.'"[12] Lest there be some question about who these "less gifted students" usually are, John Goodlad has described a typical systematic direction in school of minority students into vocational education courses given off the school premises.[13] (Yet in other states, it was alleged that minority students were discouraged from enrolling.)

Despite this criticism, we found few instances where state commissions recommended changes involving vocational education. Whether this was the result of an intentional or unintentional tilt on the part of the commissions for looking at "academic" subject matter is impossible to say. For instance, we were told by several sources that it was inappropriate to consider vocational education as a part of reforming basic skills because vocational education would inevitably get short shrift.

Tennessee and Virginia, however, did have state educational commissions that looked at vocational education. While both commissions worked hard and produced multiple recommendations, it is clear from results that reforming vocational education will — perhaps necessarily — proceed on a slow and often different track and will be as difficult a task as promoting excellence in the basics.

In Virginia, the Task Force on Vocational Education for Economic Growth — a task force composed equally of representatives from business, government, industry, and education — spent a year and a half examining Virginia's vocational program in light of changing technology and economic growth. In its report, the commission made 15 recommendations intended to shift the emphasis in vocational education from "training for jobs" to "educating for careers."

Among the more interesting of these recommendations were those calling for the Virginia Department of Education to collaborate with the Virginia Occupational Information Coordinating Committee in publishing "occupational demands forecasts"; for the State Board of Vocational Education to establish a continuous process of career assessment and guidance beginning in kindergarten, and for every high school to have its own job placement coordinator.

The Virginia State Board of Education approved these and other recommendations in January 1985. The commission sent 6,000 copies of its report around the state. Dr. Melvin H. Garner, administrative director for vocational and adult education, reported that results were "mostly highly favorable," but noted that rural schools in particular had complained that they needed money to carry out the recommendations. The plan is to go to the General Assembly for funds in January 1986. Meanwhile, the recommendation to put a job placement coordinator in every high school has, itself, become a subject for another task force to study.

Tennessee's Task Force for Secondary Vocational Education had the mission of strengthening the meld between the labor market and the skill-training offerings of the secondary schools. Its recommendations included one calling for a one-semester course to be required of all ninth grade students including counseling for careers,

aptitude/interest testing, basic employability skills, and an orientation to secondary vocational program offerings. The Task Force also recommended that the State Board for Vocational Education support funding for counseling in each local school system.

A year later, however, Warner Dickerson, the state's vocational coordinator, reported that changes in educational structure and governance in the state had stymied the recommendations. "We still think they are first-rate and will be acted upon sooner or later," he said.

Dropout Prevention and Reclamation

Much has been made of the statistic that more than one of every four students enrolling in the ninth grade drop out before high school graduation. The Board of Inquiry of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students noted in its report: "Dropout rates for black students are just under twice as great as for white students; those for Hispanic students are just over twice as great. Dropouts experience higher unemployment rates and lower earnings throughout their lives."[14]

Despite this, few commissions responding to the survey made specific recommendations dealing with dropout prevention, or for dealing with students who already had dropped out of school. In fact, as we observed earlier, only 14.3 percent of the commissions responding to our survey were considering recommendations of any kind with regard to dropouts.

Two of the commissions that did provide such recommendations were in Illinois and North Carolina. The Illinois response was part of 50 recommendations in the final report of the Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education which are included in three bills passed by one chamber of the state legislature in June 1985; the bills were under consideration in the other chamber as this report was being drafted.

Two sections of the bills deal with the problem. One would require each school district to provide programs designed to prevent at-risk students from dropping out prior to graduation. The bill defines at-risk students as "those students at least 14 years of age who evidence poor grades, attendance patterns, or a general disaffection with schooling and require modified instructional or other services which are designed to retain the students in schools."

The second pertinent section describes ways in which students who have left school prior to graduation can hook back into the system and get diplomas:

> "The State Board of Education shall require school districts to expand options available for secondary school students who demonstrate a chronic inability to adjust to the regular school program. Such programs may include optional part-time enrollment at no cost in non-degree community college courses; preparation courses for the high school level test of General Educational Development at no cost, which allow awarding the Illinois High School Equivalency Certificate regardless of one's age; part-time enrollment in any programs at area vocational centers, and re-entry of such students to the regular school program with full credit for courses taken or upon successful completion of appropriate proficiency tests."

In North Carolina, a dropout prevention program involving one-on-one counseling was in place in more than a hundred high schools at the time the Commission on Education for Economic Growth began its deliberations. The Commission called for expansion of that program. "Dropout prevention programs should be extended to the middle grades and new programs for reducing dropouts — with specific goals and timetables — should be launched." The state legislature appropriated $200,000 for that purpose.

North Carolina also has an Extended Day program which has the purpose of bringing dropouts back into the school system through providing night courses for youth who are working. While the Commission made no specific recommendations for adding to this program, it did come up with a number of recommendations involving coordinating it with

school-to-work transition programs already in place.

Transitional Programs From School to Work, Training, or Further Education

It appears to be a difficult thing for educators and other Americans involved in educational policy to look through the windows of classrooms for help that might be available outside. The MDC survey results underscore this observation. The general lack of interest in dropouts is one case in point. Another is the response to our questions about involvement of other public agencies having expertise to assist at-risk youth. It is a fascinating commentary on the relationship perceived by the education community to employment and training that only two of the 54 responding commissions saw any role for the latter in assisting with educational problems. This may reflect the fact that less than 5 percent of the commissions had representation from their State Job Training Coordinating Councils. This despite the fact that the rationale for the reform movement was to promote economic growth and productivity, and JTPA was designed to "fix" those who are a drag on the economy.

Indeed, the impetus for school-to-work transition programs has come almost uniformly from outside the educational community. Studies of these programs have concluded that an outside intervention agency is a *sine qua non* for development of school-to-work transition programs. Ironically, the first thing these outside intervention agencies must do if they are to succeed in creating real change is to find a way to invest the local schools with ownership of the program.

Interestingly, some state commissions ignored school-to-work models operating within their own borders in their recommendations. One state that did not was Virginia, where both Jobs for America's Graduates and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation-funded Partnership Project have been operating demonstration school-to-work projects in Richmond. While Virginia's Task Force on Vocational Education for Economic Growth stopped short of recommending a statewide transition program, it did produce a call for collaboration, including one recommendation that all high school graduates be competent "to transfer smoothly" from classroom to workplace or to advanced educational programs.

In North Carolina, the presence of a school-to-work transition program called Job Readiness Training (JRT), developed as a pilot program for the public schools by MDC, was highly visible in the recommendations by the Commission on Education for Economic Growth. JRT not only was operating in 53 high schools in the state but had forged secure links with the Job Training Partnership Act, bringing into the schoolroom with it the funds required to put the program on an ongoing, permanent basis.

Looking at this situation, the Commission recommended: "The State Board of Education should expand and promote school-to-work transition and guidance programs to prepare high school seniors to make the transition from school to jobs, to skills training in the community college system or to the four-year college level."

The Commission went beyond this recommendation to call for a linking of programs aimed at retaining potential dropouts and reclaiming students who already had dropped out with the school-to-work program:

> "Local school boards should promote Dropout Prevention/Job Placement Centers while integrating their operations with school-to-work transition and other employment-related secondary school programs, with Private Industry Councils, chambers of commerce and industrial associations, and with local community colleges and technical institutes."

A final recommendation went to the establishment of pilot projects for demonstration of more formal coordination:

> "The State Board of Education should establish pilot projects which create formal ties among the

Extended Day, Dropout Prevention, and School-to-Work Transition Programs, local Private Industry Councils, and employment and training system professionals for the purpose of coordinating state resources under the Job Training Partnership Act, in order to maximize benefits for economically disadvantaged youth."

While these recommendations have not been implemented, they do represent a kind of model of involvement between the schools and JTPA. Other kinds of intervention recommendations, while not numerous, are worth mentioning.

In Georgia, for instance, there is language in one recommendation calling for more involvement in public education on the part of "parents, teachers, students, and the general public." Of particular interest here is the mention of parents, who have too often taken themselves out of the decision-making apparatus in educational matters, and who have too often been shunted aside by educators as well. Reasons for the educators' apparent unwillingness to share with parents the problems of their children are complex. "A lack of good intentions and sincere concern is rarely the cause of the professional's inability to share decision-making power with the parent," one study noted. "As a general rule the professional has extraordinary difficulty in seeing when and where he oversteps the bounds of his legitimate authority."[15]

In Missouri, one commission dedicated itself entirely to the issue of parental involvement. The Parents as Teachers Committee was created by the State Commissioner of Education to work in the area of screening preschool children and involving and educating their parents. Jane Mitchell, staff director for the committee, reported that the group was able to get a bill through the legislature in April 1984, based on the state's New Parents as Teachers program, which had been piloted in four districts in the state.

The Parents as Teachers Committee raised $70,000 for training with the idea of implementation in the fall of 1985. Ms. Mitchell reported in June of this year that the Missouri legislature had approved $2.8 million to pay for the screening of one- to two-year-old children and parental education for parents of children from birth through age two. "We're starting out with early education but we hope to work up the age ladder as we go along," she said.

* * *

It is worth noting that several of the commissions singled out handicapped youth for special attention. Between 9 and 12 percent of all students in public schools in the United States are classified as special education students. Many of them are economically disadvantaged as well. While the Education For All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) calls for these students to receive a free and appropriate education with other youth, the states are left to devise their own programmatic approaches.

The Oregon Action Plan for Excellence took the approach that coordination between vocational and special education was the key to improved services to the handicapped. "Many students with disabilities need vocational education opportunities as part of their high school experience," the plan states. "Special education teachers are typically not qualified to teach vocational courses, and vocational education teachers are often unable or unwilling to work with students who have disabilities."

A key recommendation in the Oregon report was to enhance vocational education opportunities through more effective collaboration between the two school-offered services. "We're trying to establish common contact areas," said Ardis A. Christensen, assistant superintendent for curriculum in the Division of General Education. "It's a step towards real integration of available curriculum."

In Ohio, the State Superintendent's Advisory Committee on Vocational Education for the Handicapped took a similar approach. The Committee recommended establishment of a Practitioner's Task Force which held a three-day meeting to develop special

recommendations on coordination of vocational education and special education to be presented to the State Advisory Committee on Vocational Education for the Handicapped. "Anybody who works in this area knows that the key thing is to get these two actors together," said Lawrence Dennis, liaison supervisor for vocational and special education. As a result of the committee's work and the statewide meeting, special education money is being targeted to help vocational education help handicapped youth.

* * *

Special funds are available to assist handicapped students, but that is not always the case for other at-risk students. It is worth looking at the question of how the commissions thought the improvements they recommended would be paid for.

They did not, for the most part, feel that financial aid to students was feasible. Only 13.7 percent of the commissions responding called for student aid.

Appeals for new money to assist at-risk youth were generally directed to state legislatures, and the commissions generally left it to friendly legislators to determine how to meet their requests. Sadly, only a handful of the commissions — as we have noted — saw that the Job Training Partnership Act had provided funding that might be used for innovative programs, jointly planned with state and local JTPA officials and designed to assist at-risk youth educationally or in school-to-work programs.

We also asked another, different kind of funding question that produced results worth noting. It was: "Have any recommendations implemented been designed to equalize educational opportunities and/or expenditures per student across school district lines?" (C 3, p. 21.) This question went to the continuing issue in education in which inequities in tax bases breed inequities in education among school districts. Harold Howe, II, a cochairman of the Board of Inquiry of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students' study, put it this way: "State and local financing of schools adds up to a conspiracy to spend more money on rich kids and less money on poor kids."[16]

The Idaho Governor's Task Force for Education in the Eighties reported that the state already had equalized school funding. However, the Task Force's recommendations led to passage of the Idaho School Improvement Act of 1984, which provided salary equalization funding for educational staff.

Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act contains an equalization mechanism that is complex and involves incentives for the poorer systems. For each mill raised or its equivalent — up to three — beyond the statewide local fair share, the state will pay the difference in the per-student amount for each full-time student. Thus, the 168 poorest local systems in Georgia receive additional funds if they raise up to the equivalent of three additional mills over the local fair share.

Delaware's Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth called for total redesign of the school finance structure by adopting statewide equalization and increasing equalization funds by 100 percent. The state legislature responded with an appropriation of $3 million which also included incentive measures to help the poorer districts reach parity with the wealthier ones.

MDC's conclusions and recommendations from its survey of state commissions on excellence in education; what can be done to assist at-risk youth...

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

All caveats to one side — the survey was not returned by all commissions; some states are likely to be slighted in results — one conclusion seems to us inescapable. With almost two-thirds of the states represented in returns, it is safe to say that at-risk youth do not yet figure seriously in this nation's plans to achieve educational excellence. It is clear that when we think of "excellence" we think of students most capable, most ready, to achieve.

The consequences of tightening educational requirements without paying attention to the needs of more than one-third of our public school students should not escape Americans. The nation is losing 28 percent of students entering ninth grade before graduation. This body of students is made up of a high percentage of minority students. Additionally, while more than a quarter of all white Americans are 19 years old or younger today, 40 percent of all Hispanics and more than a third of all blacks are in that age group. With 73 percent of responding commissions failing to take note of these students, far from improving the graduation rate, the excellence in education movement may actually worsen the dropout rate by excluding them from consideration.

Continuing to heap students into a "failing" group headed out of school toward unemployment is likely to have dire consequences for the economy of this nation. That can be said without even referring to the staggering loss of human potential involved.

While overall survey results are distressing, they do present a positive side. Some few states are taking action; some state education commissions have faced the problem squarely. They have said that excellence does indeed require that standards be higher for all, but they have emphasized that *all* must have improved opportunity to achieve. They have said that the gap between the most advantaged and the most disadvantaged must not be allowed to widen.

They have said something else. They have said that education is not a subject to be confined only to the classroom. On the contrary, they have seen it as a subject of vital interest to the entire community, one that should draw heavily on total community resources. They have said that education must open the door to successful work for all of the school population, and that those open doors should admit advisers from many walks of life — parents and business people and teachers beyond the high school level and representatives of agencies capable of helping youth through the difficult transition from school to work or further education.

The most immediate, clear linkage that should be established where at-risk youth are concerned is with the agents of further training, education, and employment. The advantaged youth may need assistance in choosing college, but he or she does not need the assistance the disadvantaged youth needs in determining crucial next steps after high school. Here, community-based organizations, community and junior colleges, and the myriad training opportunities under the Job Training Partnership Act should come into play.

For youth not destined for further formal education, JTPA should have a chance to provide the answers. It is the formal mechanism by which this nation has chosen to provide training for its youth. Congress intended for it to make linkages with public education. It has the blessing and the active, day-by-day support of private-sector employers. Everywhere there are public schools and JTPA — and that is everywhere in America — the opportunity lies to make common cause.

Some of the states' educational commissions have seen that. The time has come to help educators and the individuals responsible for educational policy everywhere in the country see it. If this can be done, the national crusade for excellence need not leave behind millions of youth who — while they may be less able to march in the forefront today — represent a huge investment in this country's tomorrow.

We recommend:

1. *That all state educational commissions which are*

still deliberating, or continue in existence for monitoring purposes, consider recommendations targeted to at-risk youth especially in the following areas:

a. *Early identification of problems and appropriate remediation to narrow the gap between the skills advantaged and disadvantaged youth bring to public schooling.*
b. *Career exploration and vocational education reform to concentrate during the middle and late years of schooling on developing awareness in all students of their potential as workers.*
c. *Dropout prevention and dropout reclamation programs aimed at halting the flow of students out of school without high school diplomas.*
d. *Transitional programs from school to work, training, or further education to develop partnerships between educators and the private sector and key agencies in the community able to assist youth in making the move from the schoolroom to the world beyond.*

2. *That in states where educational commissions have ceased deliberating, and no longer exist, commissions be appointed specifically to deal with the educational problems of the at-risk youth population.*
3. *That the governors and chief educational officers of the states take personal responsibility for implementation of recommendations assisting at-risk youth made by sitting educational commissions or those subsequently constituted.*
4. *That governors, their State Job Training Coordinating Councils, and the Service Delivery Areas established in each state under the Job Training Partnership Act use the funds provided for youth to help schools and local private industry councils establish programs which respond effectively to the needs of at-risk youth.*

Authors

R. C. Smith is a former newspaper editor who has been with MDC for 17 years. He is the author of numerous magazine articles and one nonfiction book on race relations (*They Closed Their Schools*, University of North Carolina Press, 1965). Since joining MDC, he has written extensively on employment problems, with an emphasis on youth and, especially, school-to-work transition. His most recent publications have been *Seven Special Kids*, a book-length monograph on employment problems of handicapped youth, and *Institutionalizing the School-To-Work Transition*, a report examining best practices in linkages between school and the workplace.

Edward L. Hester heads Market Research for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. Dr. Hester was an economist with MDC for eight years. Prior to that, he worked with Proctor and Gamble and Corning Glass and taught college economics. Before turning his attention to youth employment issues, he concentrated on public/private partnerships and rural development issues for MDC.

Footnotes

1. The National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation At Risk* (United States Department of Education, April 1983).

2. Education Commission of the States: Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, *State Task Forces or Commissions on Education Issues* (ECS Working Paper, October 1983).

3. Children's Defense Fund: CDF Reports, *Education Reports Prompt State Reform* (CDF, December 1984-January 1985).

4. Ernest L. Boyer, *High School* (Harper & Row, 1981).

5. Mortimer J. Adler, *The Paideia Proposal* (Macmillan, 1982).

6. Education Commission of the States, *A 50-State Survey* (State Programs of School Improvement, 1983).

7. Board of Inquiry, National Coalition of Advocates for Students, *Barriers to Excellence: Our Children at Risk* (NCAS, 1984).

8. R.C. Smith, *Seven Special Kids: Employment Problems of Handicapped Youth* (MDC, June 1983).

9. Board of Inquiry, op. cit.

10. North Carolina Commission on Education for Economic Growth; Oregon Action Plan for Excellence, Task Forces A and B; Pennsylvania Task Force on Testing; Tennessee Task Force for Secondary Vocational Education; Governor's Commission on Virginia's Future; Task Force on Vocational Education for Economic Growth (Virginia); Free Enterprise Task Force (Arizona); Governor's Commission on Quality Education (Arizona); Chancellor's Task Force on Academic Quality (California); Governor's Task Force on Education for Economic Growth (Delaware); Governor's Education Review Commission (Georgia); Iowa Excellence in Education Task Force; Governor's Commission on the Status of Education in Maine; Illinois Commission on the Improvement of Elementary and Secondary Education.

11. Paul Osterman, *Getting Started: The Youth Labor Market* (Cambridge MIT Press, 1980).

12. Boyer, op. cit.

13. John Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (McGraw-Hill, 1984).

14. Board of Inquiry, op. cit.

15. John Gliedman and William Roth, *The Unexpected Minority: Handicapped Children in America* (Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich, 1980).

16. *New York Times*, "Schools Neglect Many" (January 29, 1985).

Appendix

August 9, 1984

EDUCATION COMMISSION SURVEY

Name of commission or council: _____

Name of respondent: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

* * * * *

The work of this commission/council:

Check:

_____ has been under way since (first meeting date) _____.

_____ is ongoing; recommendations have not yet been completed.

_____ is ongoing; this council has made its recommendations, but has a continuing role beyond the development of recommendations.

_____ is completed; this council has disbanded after delivering its recommendations.
Date of last meeting: _____.

Commission/council recommendations are available from:

_____ Phone: _____.

Commission/council recommendations will be available on or about _____.
Date

A. **General Information**

1. Who created this commission/council?
   _____ Governor
   _____ Legislature
   _____ State Superintendent of Education
   _____ Higher Education Commission
   _____ State Department of Education
   _____ State Board of Education
   _____ State University/College System
   _____ Business/Industry
   _____ Other _____
2. Please briefly describe the process used by this commission/council to gather information and ideas for its recommendations.

3. Commission/council membership

   A. Membership composition

   _____ Private sector representatives
   _____ Elected officials
   _____ Public agency representatives (which agencies)
   _____ Students
   _____ Educators: #_____ Elementary
   #_____ Middle school
   #_____ Secondary
   #_____ Post-secondary
   _____ Public members
   _____ Community-based organizations
   _____ Others
   _____ TOTAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS (Please avoid double counting members in these categories. Number of members in each category should add up to the total.)

   B. Membership characteristics

   #_____ Women
   #_____ Minorities
   #_____ Youth (21 years old and younger)

   C. Representation from other councils

   #_____ Representatives from the SJTCC
   #_____ Representatives from the State Advisory Council on Vocational Education

4. Please describe the role and mission of this council.

5. Did/does this commission/council deal with educational needs at the: (Check all appropriate responses)

   _____ Pre-school level
   _____ Elementary level
   _____ Middle school level
   _____ Secondary school level
   _____ Post-secondary school level

6. Were the Governor _____ or any state legislators _____ directly and personally involved in the work of this commission/council? (Check either, both, or neither, as appropriate.)

   _____ Either
   _____ Both
   _____ Neither

7. Approximately how many students will be affected by the recommendations of this commission/council?

   _____ Pre-school
   _____ Elementary
   _____ Middle
   _____ Secondary
   _____ Post-secondary

8. Have total (average) noncapital item expenditures per student in your state/jurisdiction:

   _____ Increased since 1980?
   _____ Stayed about the same since 1980?
   _____ Decreased since 1980?

B. **Commission/Council Recommendation Topics**

1. On what topics did this commission/council focus for its recommendations? Check all appropriate topics below.

   Mainstream Issues

   1. _____ Curriculum reform
   2. _____ Graduation requirements
   3. _____ College admissions
   4. _____ Student evaluation/testing
   5. _____ Textbooks/instructional materials
   6. _____ Academic recognition programs

7. _____ Instructional time
8. _____ Longer school days
9. _____ Specialized schools (e.g., magnets, honor schools, area vocational schools, alternative schools, extended day, and community schools)
10. _____ Academic enrichment programs
11. _____ Placement/promotional policies
12. _____ Extracurricular/athletic policies
13. _____ Teacher certification/preparation
14. _____ Salary increases
15. _____ Master teachers/career ladders
16. _____ Teacher shortages
17. _____ Professional development of teachers and administrators
18. _____ Economic development
19. _____ School and class size
20. _____ The effectiveness of vocational education programs in the public schools

Administrative Issues

21. _____ Coordination of educational systems
22. _____ Articulation of secondary and post-secondary programming
23. _____ Financing educational programs and services
24. _____ Financing educational capital budget items
25. _____ School/district consolidation

Targeting Issues

26. _____ The special needs of disadvantaged students
    - _____ Potential drop outs
    - _____ Drop outs
    - _____ Educationally disadvantaged students
    - _____ Migrants
    - _____ Neglected or delinquent youth
    - _____ Mentally or physically handicapped youth
    - _____ Non-English speaking youth
    - _____ Incarcerated youth
    - _____ Underachievers, unmotivated youth
    - _____ Economically disadvantaged youth
    - _____ Youth not continuing their education after high school
    - _____ Minority youth
    - _____ Teenage parents

*** Special Programs**

27. _____ Skills training
28. _____ Bilingual instruction/English as a second language
29. _____ School-to-work transition programs
30. _____ Career exploration programs
31. _____ Drop-out prevention programs
32. _____ Remediation programs

*** Program-related Services**

33. _____ Maintenance of attendance
34. _____ Job development and placement services
35. _____ School discipline management
36. _____ Counseling, guidance and motivation
37. _____ Substance abuse programs
38. _____ Equipment and facilities for handicapped students

*** Student Supportive Services**

39. _____ Financial aid for students
40. _____ School bus transportation services
41. _____ Part-time jobs and summer jobs
42. _____ School nutrition programs
43. _____ Health care for students

*** Structural Issues**

44. _____ Public/private partnerships in education
45. _____ The role of JTPA in the public schools
46. _____ The role of the Employment Service in the public schools
47. _____ The role of parents in the schools
48. _____ The role of community-based organizations in the schools

2.a. Did this commission/council **specifically** target any of its recommendations in the last four issue areas above* to: [Check your answer(s)]

_____ Economically disadvantaged students
_____ Underachieving students
_____ Secondary school graduates not planning on further education or training

2.b. If **yes** in any of these four categories, which of the topical areas (#27-48) was involved? (Write item # from question B.1)

Did any of these areas involve out-of-school youth? _____yes _____no
If out-of-school youth #: _____ _____ _____ _____

2.c. If **no** for these four categories, why not?

2.d. If 2.b. above has yes answers, what were those recommendations?

3. If any of the topics in the above checklist under "**Special Programs**" (for issue topics #27 through 32) was checked **without reference to** economically disadvantaged youth, underachievers, or students graduating but not going on to further schooling or training, what were the recommendations on those subjects?

#27. Skill training: _____

#28. Bilingual instruction/English as a Second Language: _____

#29. School-to-work transition programs: _____

#30. Career exploration programs: _____

#31. Drop-out prevention programs: _____

#32. Remediation programs: _____

4. It has been argued that many of the difficulties of disadvantaged youth in our schools are caused by problems or circumstances in the community. Such youth therefore may not respond well to attempts to motivate them to academic achievement.

Did the commission/council recommend that other public agencies with programs and expertise designed to deal with such external problems become involved with the schools? _____Yes _____No
If yes, which agencies?

_____ Law enforcement
_____ Mental health
_____ Social services
_____ Employment and training
_____ Substance abuse
_____ Other _____

C. **Implementation Issues**

1. Are any of the commission/council's recommendations targeted specifically towards economically disadvantaged youth, underachieving youth, and youth not going on to post-secondary schooling **being implemented?** _____Yes _____No

a. If yes, which ones? #s: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

b. Which recommendations **will** definitely **be implemented**?

c. If no, why not? _____

2. Has the state passed any special enabling legislation or appropriations to implement any of these recommendations?
_____Yes _____No
Title: _____
Sponsoring legislator: _____

3. Have any recommendations implemented been designed to equalize educational opportunities and/or expenditures per student across school district lines? _____Yes _____No
Describe briefly: _____

4. For those recommendations under part B.2.b. above that have been or will definitely be implemented, please complete the information on the following page for each such recommendation.

Board of Directors of MDC, Inc.

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